

9 December 2020

## **Egypt: New case against human rights defender Abdelrahman Tarek**

On 3 December 2020, Egypt's State Public Prosecutor ordered the detention of human rights defender **Abdelrahman Tarek** for 15 days. This comes after the human rights defender was accused of being involved in case No.1056 which was opened in 2020. The human rights defender was charged with 'joining an illegal organisation' and 'funding terrorism'. This is the third time he has faced the charge of 'joining an illegal organisation'. On the same day, Abdelrahman Tarek started an open-ended hunger strike to protest against the Prosecutor General's decision. The human rights defender has been in detention since 10 September 2019 despite the Criminal Court of Cairo ordering his release under precautionary measures in September 2020.

[Abdelrahman Tarek](#) works with the Al-Nedal Centre for Rights and Freedoms and focuses on defending the right to free speech and freedom of expression in Egypt, and defending the rights of prisoners, especially in cases of enforced disappearances.

On 22 September 2020, the Criminal Court of Cairo ordered the release of Abdelrahman Tarek under precautionary measures, however, the release order was never enforced. On 3 December 2020, after being held in arbitrary detention for more than 70 days, the State Public Prosecutor accused Abdelrahman Tarek of being involved in case No.1056 opened in 2020, which is investigating the alleged establishment and the funding of a terrorist organisation. The newly opened case does not specify the name of the 'illegal organisation' or provide the evidence used to open this case. As part of this case, the human rights defender is charged with 'joining an illegal organisation' and 'funding terrorism'. On 3 December, the State Public Prosecutor ordered 15 days' preventive detention of Abdelrahman Tarek. He is only allowed limited access to his lawyer and no family visits have been permitted.

On the 10 September 2019, the human rights defender was detained by Egyptian security forces during his daily judicial observation session at the Qasr Al-Neil police station in Cairo. The Public Prosecutor accused him of joining groups deemed illegal by the state, and publishing false news on the political and economic situation in Egypt in order to disturb public order. According to his colleagues, Abdelrahman Tarek was the subject of ill-treatment and torture during his time in detention, which included the use of electric shocks. On 10 March 2020, the Criminal Court of Cairo ordered his release under precautionary measures, however, the human rights defender was not released. On 30 April 2020, the Public Prosecutor in Cairo ordered his placement in preventive detention for 15 days, after he was again accused of 'joining an illegal group', and 'defamation' and 'misuse of social media'.

Abdelrahman Tarek has been frequently harassed by the Egyptian authorities for his human rights work. In 2012 he was accused of organising a peaceful demonstration without a permit and subsequently placed in detention for five months. In January 2015 Abdelrahman Tarek was detained for four years on the same charge. According to his colleagues, the human rights defender was tortured and ill-treated during his detention, and was frequently placed in solitary confinement. The human rights defender was conditionally released in December 2018, on the condition that he report for 12 hours every evening to a local police station.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned about the new charges being brought against Abdelrahman Tarek as it believes that the human rights defender is being detained solely as a result of his peaceful and legitimate human rights activities.

### **Front Line Defenders Urges the Egyptian authorities to:**

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Abdelrahman Tarek, and drop all the charges against him, as Front Line Defenders believes that he is being held solely as a result of his legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights;
2. Ensure that the treatment of Abdelrahman Tarek, while in detention, adheres to the conditions set out in the *'Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment'*, adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 43/173 of 9 December 1988;
3. Allow Abdelrahman Tarek immediate and unfettered access to his family and lawyer;
4. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the torture of human rights defender Abdelrahman Tarek, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
5. Cease targeting all human rights defenders in Egypt and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.